

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-07 SAJ-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-13 /081 W

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P R 201653Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8219

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

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AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: GW, IT, PINT, PFOR

SUBJECT: FRG REACTION TO CHANCELLOR'S REMARKS ON
ITALIAN SITUATION

REF: BONN 6542 (NOTAL)

BEGIN SUMMARY: RESPONSE TO CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S
APRIL 15 OBLIQUE CRITICISM OF THE ITALIAN CHRISTIAN
DEMOCRATS AND HIS REACTION TO SECRETARY KISSINGER'S
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CONCERN ABOUT COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN WESTERN

EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS (REFTEL) REVERBERATED IN THE FRG OVER THE LONG EASTER HOLIDAY WEEKEND. THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR SOUGHT CLARIFICATION FROM THE CHANCELLERY, THE LOCAL CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION SHARPLY CRITICIZED THE SCHMIDT TELEVISION INTERVIEW, AND SOCIAL-LIBERAL COALITION SPOKESMEN DEFENDED THE REMARKS, ALTHOUGH FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER ADDED THAT "RESPONSIBLE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL LEADERS" (READ SECRETARY KISSINGER) HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO WARN OF THE INCREASING COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN WESTERN EUROPE. A GENERAL UNDER-CURRENT FROM ALL SIDES HOWEVER WAS THE VIEW THAT THESE FOREIGN POLICY REMARKS OF THE CHANCELLOR HAVE TO BE VIEWED IN THE DOMESTIC CONTEXT OF THE ONGOING NATIONAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN. END OF SUMMARY.

1. ALTHOUGH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S 45-MINUTE TELEVISION INTERVIEW ON APRIL 15 COVERED A WIDE VARIETY OF TOPICS, MAIN ATTENTION HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON HIS VIEWS ABOUT THE CURRENT ITALIAN SCENE. WITHOUT NAMING ITALY BY NAME, THE CHANCELLOR IN HIS REMARKS CRITICIZED THE SITUATION "IN A COUNTRY RULED FOR THIRTY YEARS BY CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS." AFTER SAYING THAT AS CHANCELLOR OF A FRIENDLY COUNTRY HE SHOULD NOT SPEAK OUT ON THE DOMESTIC AFFAIRS OF ANOTHER, HE WENT ON TO IMPLY THAT WESTERN EUROPE'S PRESENT WEAKNESSES ARE DOMESTIC AND NATIONAL ONES, RATHER THAN REGIONAL FAILINGS. SPEAKING AS DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE SPD, SCHMIDT REPEATED THE CLAIM THAT IN THOSE COUNTRIES--AUSTRIA, FRG, SCANDINAVIA--WHERE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS HAVE PLAYED A LEADING ROLE, THE COMMUNIST INFLUENCE HAS BEEN MINIMAL. ON THE OTHER HAND, SCHMIDT CLAIMED, "ONE FINDS COMMUNIST PARTIES WITH WEIGHT WHERE THE OLD RELATIONSHIPS HAVE BEEN MAINTAINED OVER THE DECADES WITH FORCE AND MIGHT ("MIT GEWALT UND KRAFT"); IN PORTUGAL, IN SPAIN, IN ITALY, IN A CERTAIN SENSE IN FRANCE AS FURTHERED BY THE GAULLISTS."

2. ON APRIL 16 ITALIAN AMBASSADOR CORRADO ORLANDI CONTUCCI MADE A PUBLICIZED CALL TO AN ALMOST DESERTED (WHILE GOOD FRIDAY) CHANCELLERY TO SEEK AN EXPLANATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF SCHMIDT'S COMMENTS, AND IN PARTICULAR A CLARIFICATION OF USE OF SUCH LANGUAGE AS "MIT GEWALT UND KRAFT." HE REPORTEDLY WAS TOLD THAT THE REMARKS WERE DIRECTED MORE AGAINST THE PREVIOUS SITUATION IN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL, AND THAT THERE WERE TRANSLATION IMPRECISIONS.

3. CDU FRAKTION LEADER KARL CARSTENS HELD IT WAS "UNIQUE" THAT A GERMAN GOVERNMENT HEAD SHOULD THUS MIX

IN THE POLITICAL AFFAIRS OF AN ALLIED NATION, ALTHOUGH THE SCHMIDT REMARKS WERE CLEARLY AIMED TO HURT THE CDU/CSU. CARSTENS ADDED THAT SCHMIDT'S REMARKS ABOUT SECRETARY KISSINGER'S CONCERN VIS-A-VIS COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN NATO NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS WAS A "FAUX PAS." HE WARNED THAT "REPETITION OF SUCH ADVICE" MIGHT "VERY WELL CAUSE SERIOUS DAMAGE" TO GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS.

4. FDP FRAKTION CHAIRMAN MISCHNICK ON THE OTHER HAND SUPPORTED THE CHANCELLOR'S VIEWS. MISCHNICK COMPARED THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE FRG SOCIAL-LIBERAL COALITION

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WITH THE STEADILY WORSENING SOCIAL TURMOIL IN ITALY UNDER THIRTY YEARS OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP. CONSERVATIVE STAGNATION IN ITALY HAD ENABLED THE PCI TO BECOME AN INCREASINGLY VITAL FACTOR IN ITALIAN DOMESTIC POLITICS, HE CHARGED.

5. DEPUTY CDU PRESS SPOKESMAN PRUYS REPLIED THAT BEFORE ONE PLAYS "SCHOOLMASTER OF EUROPE," ONE SHOULD TRY TO PUT ONE'S OWN HOUSE IN ORDER. HE HELD THAT MISCHNICK'S COMMENTS ADDED TO THE FIRE, AND COULD CAUSE A CRISIS IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FRG-ITALIAN RELATIONS.

6. FOREIGN MINISTER (AND FDP CHAIRMAN) GENSCHER ATTEMPTED TO KEEP HIS HEAD LOW IN THE EXCHANGE. INITIALLY HE STATED THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAD NO THOUGHTS TO ADD TO THE DISCUSSION. THEN, ON APRIL 19 IN A RADIO INTERVIEW HE SAID CONCERN IS GROWING OVER THE INCREASING COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN THE EC. GENSCHER DEFENDED THE CHANCELLOR'S CRITICAL STATEMENTS ABOUT THE ITALIAN SCENE, SINCE THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE EC MEMBER STATES WITH ONE ANOTHER IS NOW CLOSER, AND ONE CAN THUS AFFORD TO SPEAK MORE OPENLY ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE OTHER INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES. HE AGREED HOWEVER THAT "RESPONSIBLE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL LEADERS" SHOULD POINT TO THE DANGER OF AN INCREASE IN COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN THE EC COUNTRIES, THUS IMPLICITLY CONTRADICTING SCHMIDT'S CRITICISM OF THE SECRETARY.

7. PRESS COVERAGE OF THE CHANCELLOR'S INTERVIEW AND ITS AFTERMATH HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE. SOME EDITORIALS-FOR EXAMPLE IN THE "WESTFAELISCHE RUNDSCHAU" ACCLAIMED THE CHANCELLOR FOR THIS DEMONSTRATION OF "UNEMOTIONAL AND FACTUAL" PORTRAYAL OF THE WORLD POLITICAL SCENE. THE "HANNOVERSCHE ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG" IN AN EDITORIAL ENTITLED "KAISER WILHELM" RECALLED THE APPELATION THE CHANCELLOR IS DEVELOPING IN EUROPE WITH HIS PENCHANT FOR "AUTOCRATICALLY" ACTING AS IF HE WERE EMPEROR WILLIAM II. PRO-CDU PRESS REACTION WAS PREDICTABLY HOSTILE. ALMOST ALL COMMENTARIES SAW SCHMIDT'S THOUGHTS INFLUENCED BY THE UPCOMING BUNDESTAG ELECTION. PERHAPS "BILD AM SONNTAG" BEST SUMMED UP THE GENERAL PRESS VIEW WITH THE REACTION: "SCHMIDT FIRED HIS SHOT AGAINST ROME, BUT HE INTENDED TO HIT MAINZ" (SEAT OF MINISTER PRESIDENT AND CHANCELLOR-CANDIDATE KOHL). HE THOUGHT

MORO AND MEANT KOHL.

8. COMMENT: AN OFFICIAL AT THE ITALIAN EMBASSY HAS INFORMED US PRIVATELY THAT FOR AWHILE THERE WAS TALK OF MAKING A FORMAL PROTEST ABOUT THE CHANCELLOR'S REMARKS, IN PARTICULAR HIS USE OF "GEWALT AND KRAFT." IT WAS THEN AGREED HOWEVER THAT THE CHANCELLOR'S COMMENTS MUST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE SEEN IN THE CURRENT PRE-ELECTION CLIMATE. STILL, THE EMBASSY WAS UNHAPPY THAT NO TOP OFFICIAL WAS AT THE CHANCELLERY TO HEAR AMBASSADOR CONTUCCI, WHEN HE CAME BY TO SEEK AN EXPLANATION. ITALIANEMBASSY OFFICIALS HOPE THE SUBJECT WILL DIE DOWN AND THAT FRG OFFICIALS "WOULD JUST SHUT UP" ABOUT THE ITALIAN SCENE FOR THE TIME BEING SINCE, THEY FEEL, SUCH REMARKS AS THOSE OF THE CHANCELLOR'S HELP THE COMMUNISTS, BUT THEY ARE NOT SANGUINE.
HILLENBRAND

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